

The Athenian Mercury.

Quest. 1. **VV** Hether the Gunpowder-Treason was only, as some tell us, a Plot of Cecil's making— and What's the Reason why the Word Faction, &c. charged upon the Papists, in the Common-Prayer-Book, made in King James the First's time, after the Discovery of the Plot, shou'd be left out in our Divine Service for that Day, for above these Twenty years last past; and those Words being not Repeal'd, Why are they not Read still?

Ans. We have ventur'd to put these two Questions together, and to dispatch 'em here, though we lately receiv'd 'em, having already so many Thousands lying by us Unanswer'd, that we can no longer observe any Method, unless persons forbear sending in more, which they can't yet be perswaded to do.— We have put them together, as Treating on the same Subject, though how they'll agree we can't tell; since they seem to come from perfectly differing Quarters; and one of 'em Transcrib'd from William Pryn, as t'other from some of the Nicknam'd Popish Authors. However, we shall endeavour to dispatch 'em both in their order, and give each of 'em a fair Answer. To the First— Whether the Gunpowder-Plot was a Real thing, or only an Artifice of Cecil's, to bring an Odium upon the poor innocent Catholicks? In Answer, Some wou'd here reflect on the uncertainty of History, and how unlikely we are to have a true Account of what past long ago, when some tell us the *Fabulous Age* is not yet over, at least, doubt is made of what past, but in the Memories of some yet living— But we are rather inclin'd to a Reflection of a quite different Nature, and that is, on the Impudence of some Persons, who would perswade us to renounce our Sences in History as well as Divinity; who affront the whole VVorld together; and when any of their own Villains are concern'd, will not allow all the Evidence that can be brought for matter of Fact, to be a sufficient Proof against 'em.

But though all their Champions have been over and over notoriously baffled on this Head, it may be worth the while, either to satisfie some mistaken persons, or set right others, who seem to be in love with Paradoxes, to sum up part of the Evidence which we yet have; That the Papists were as much the Authors of that Conspiracy, which yet goes by their Name, as *Caliline* was of his. And the first Argument is the very express words of the Act of Parliament, Enacted in the Third year of King James's Reign, which charges it on that Party with a witness, and tells us, *That many Papists, Jesuits and Seminary Priests conspired horribly,*

&c. A modest Man wou'd scarce desire better proof then a *Record*, and here's that of the greatest Authority that can be, that of an Act of Parliament, of the King and Three Estates of the Realm, as they are call'd in the Service for the Day— which brings to the Second Proof on't, namely, That very Service, Compos'd, as is usual, by the most Reverend the Bishops, and used to this day on that occasion, and so likely to continue to the end of Time: Wherein 'tis asserted, over and over, that the Papists were the true Fathers of this Bratt, which is so very like 'em; so that here is, as we may say, both Law and Gospel against them who deny it: and indeed, 'tis so broad an affront to the Nation, to think we have been mocking God, for a feigned Deliverance, almost this Hundred years: and the Parliament of England first led us the way, that nothing, one wou'd think, but the Brow of a Jesuit shou'd have Brags enough to affirm it. But we have yet more than this—we have, to this very day, the Tryals and Examinations of the Persons concern'd, and the gross contradictions and palpable Lies of *Garnet* himself, their *Gunpowder-Saint*; who, when confronted beyond even his own Impudence, confess'd that he knew it, but his Conscience was so queasy, that, because 'twas reveal'd to him in Confession, he dared not disclose it. Though a whole Nation must thereby have inevitably perish'd: But some of the Traitors confest it by their after-actions, on the Discovery of the Design, more loudly than others did by their words. Flight is esteem'd a natural Sign of Guilt, for which reason our Law asks of an accused Criminal, Did he fly for the same? But these fled with a witness, as many as cou'd get out of reach, for they broke out into open Rebellion, and some dy'd desperately fighting, while others were taken, like a Knot of desperate Thieves, or Highway-men, opposing the Sheriffs and Country which came in upon 'em; over and besides all which, we have very strong collateral Evidence, that some such Design was then on Foot, from Disputations of that Nature in Forreign Seminaries, wherein 'twas resolv'd as Lawful to kill the righteous with the wicked, for the carrying on so laudable a Villany. But we have not only Testimonies from that Age, but even from this present wherein we live; Providence having almost miraculously preserved to us the very Original Letters of *Sir Everard Digby's* own Hand-writing, the Gravest and the most Pity'd of all the Conspirators, who therein plainly acknowledges the Design, and glories in it, esteeming it a very Meritorious Action, and taking it very ha'nously that any good Catholick shou'd condemn

denn him for being engag'd therein. To examine now a little into that shallow pretence— That this was *Cecil's Plot*— How much it was so, by what has been already prov'd, let the World be Judge— but they are content with less if this won't be swallowed whole. If he did not make it all, and if there were any thing in't, 'twas he, they say, drew a few poor Gentlemen in, to their own Destruction— But over and besides the Barbarity of such a Fact, which therefore 'tis very unjust to fix on the Memory of so great a States-man, when we have no Reason for't, but a Papist's bare Asseveration; Is it any thing rational to suppose, that he drew in *Garnet, Faux*, nay all those Foreign Papists, in whose Seminary the Lawfulness of the very intended action was so long before disputed and concluded? But indeed this is their common way, when there's no other left, and when they can't deny palpable Fact, to endeavour its mitigation, by endeavouring to share the Plot betwixt themselves and the Discoverers; VVhich has been both an old and a new shift among 'em; For the *New*, it needs not to be mention'd, since the Instances of it are yet fresh in every Man's Mind— and for old Examples, there's a Famous one in the Conspiracy of *Babington*, &c. against *Q. Elizabeth*, which her Secretary of State, one of the greatest Politicians in the VVorld, having then discover'd, and producing the very Letters and Answers sent by *Mary Q. of Scots*, some by her Secretary, others under her own hand, consenting to the said Conspiracy; *Father Causin*, to excuse her herein, pretends, that *Q. Elizabeth's* Council having open'd the Letters, inserted what they pleas'd there, and besides, drew poor *Queen Mary* into that Plot, on purpose to find occasion against her— But to return to the Powder-Treason, Mark't to this day in our *Ecclesiastical*, as well as *Civil Kalendar*, by the Name of the *Papists Conspiracy*; we question whether there's one Protestant Author who denies it: *Osborn*, 'tis true, seems to speak slightly of it, but every one knows him for a Man of little Faith in such matters, and an extremely prejudic'd VVriter, by want of Preferment, and some Sights he receiv'd at Court, which even he himself acknowledges— nay, in the same History contradicts himself, if he denies the thing, for he somewhere insinuates, that *Harry the IV.* lost his Life for revealing the Design to *K. James*, to whose Fear or Sagacity he's by no means willing to attribute the Discovery— though his Argument is very weak which he raises against the manner of it, by a Letter to the Lord Mounteagle, as our Chronicles generally give it— For, says he, had the Discovery been by him, 'tis likely he wou'd have had some greater Reward, whereas he had but a small Pension allotted him— as if supposing this true, want of Gratitude were such a strange thing in a hungry Court, that it must necessarily infer want of Merit. But besides, by what means soever the Discovery was made, the Story of the Letter is as

probable as any, and that passage in't [of a Terrible Blow, and yet none to perceive who hurt 'em] might sooner be interpreted aright, of some Blow by Gunpowder, by King *James* than any other, whose Father had before lost his Life that way, and who used to retain such Impressions of Terror taken in his Childhood, longer than most others.

Thus we hope we have pretty well dispatcht this First Question, and Fathered the Bratt on the true Mother; for further satisfaction wherein, we refer the Reader to that Elaborate Piece of the late Learned Bishop of *Lincoln* on this Subject.

For the Second Question; Why the word *Faction*, &c. formerly charged upon the *Papists*, has been left out in the Service on this occasion for these Twenty years last past? We Answer, The Gentleman has but half the Story; For, first of all, the word *Faction*, &c. was never in Terms charged upon the *Papists* alone, in any Form for this Day, that we have yet seen. The word mention'd, and those that follow it, are in the Second Collect of Morning Prayer; wherein the Church desires God wou'd strengthen the King's hands with Judgment and Justice to cut off [All] such workers of Iniquity, &c. Then Secondly, it has not been left out in the Service, neither for these Twenty years last past, nor any other time; for both the words *Rebellion* and *Faction* are still to be Read there to this day—

Again, That Alteration which was made therein, was done long enough before the very beginning of Twenty years last past, by a Person Famous enough, as well as the History of the words, which needs not here be repeated. After all, the Sence is much what the same, if not better than 'twas before; our Church not pretending to be Infallible, either in her Decisions or Devotions; in the latter having made Frequent Alterations, and is likely to do more. The words were at first— "whose Religion is Rebellion, and whose Faith is Faction— which, though including [ALL] such Workers of Iniquity, 'as is before-said, yet we own might have, and we doubt not but it had a Particular Respect to the *Papists*— which though they are spoken severely enough of in the same Office, and that vrry deservedly, yet that expression was thought not so congruous as what was Substituted in its room— "All such as turn Religion "into Rebellion, and Faith into Faction; since 'twas, at least a Catachrestical Expression, to call Religion, Rebellion; or Faith, Faction; especially since part of the Romish Religion, and Faith too, namely the 12 Articles of the Apostles Creed, are the same with ours, though they have made such foul Superstructures to it, as has, at least, implicitly Shockt the Foundation almost in every Stone (or Article) thereof. However, most of the Doctors of our Communion, and such as are far enough from Popery, have granted the Church of Rome to be still a True Church (as the Rottenest Patient in Kingdome-Hospital may be still a True Man, though a very stinking one.) On which account this Alteration we suppose was made; and if by the Bishops, or any Authoriz'd by the King, Legally enough there Inserted.

Quest. 2. If the cause of Death be in the Body only, What may that be in the Body which causes the Soul to separate from it? May it not be that the Body as some have expressed it, becomes untenentable to the Soul?

Ans. If it be so, as we believe it is, the cause of the separation however depends upon both. First of all the Body is rendred untenentable by Diseases, and then the Soul, by a natural reluctance, must forsake its Old friend because it can't act therein any longer.